



**May 31, 2007**

***PRESS RELEASE***

**Yerevan** – Since November 2006, the Center for Regional Development/Transparency International Armenia has been implementing the monitoring of party finance and use of administrative resource in the cities of Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor for the 2007 Parliamentary Elections in Armenia. The project is aimed at studying and analyzing pre- and post-election developments in the political arena, revealing deficiencies in the electoral legislation, detection and recording of possible violations and misuses, as well as proposing recommendations to ensure legitimate and democratic elections. The monitoring project, funded by OSI Assistance Foundation Armenia, also involves Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor office and "Asparez" Journalists' Club in Gyumri.

According to the findings of the monitoring project, two parties - Armenian Republican Party and Prosperous Armenia Party - exceeded the 60 million AMD limitation for the pre-election (campaign) fund provided by Article 112.4 of the Armenian Electoral Code. The mentioned parties spent on campaign materials and events, respectively, more than **79.1 million** and **129.6 million AMD**. Other parties that passed the 5% threshold spent 50.7 million (ARF-Dashnaktutyun), 33.1 million (Country of Law Party) and 24.0 million (Heritage Party). Campaign expenses of all those parties which did not win seats in the Parliament reached much lower numbers.

Through the course of project implementation, costs of party campaign materials (such as billboards, posters, booklets, pens, flags, etc.) were calculated. When information about a number of produced items was missing, calculations were made assuming that there were at least 1,000 items. Costs of production of campaign films, along with expenses for the paid airtime for broadcasting on 4 national TV channels and 6 TV companies covering the capital only, were computed as well.

Information concerning duration of paid airtime was taken from the media monitoring data of Yerevan Press Club while costs of films were calculated by an independent expert. In the case of events expenditures, both costs of equipment and honoraria of musicians invited from abroad were taken into account. Calculations were made based on experts' estimates as

well as information published in the media. Honoraria of local musicians were not considered in the case of Armenian Republican Party because of their publicly announced free support to that party.

During the project implementation, there were many people reporting instances of vote-bribes throughout the country to the monitoring team. However, citizens were scared to be a witness of such crimes and it was not possible to record the reported bribery cases and calculate how much was spent by parties for those “expenses”. Evidence of the existing fear was the fact that a week before the elections, respondents refused to answer phone survey questions related to vote-bribes. A few days after elections, only 13.75% of 1,018 respondents from Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor said that they or their relatives/friends had been offered bribes (ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 AMD). The Armenian Republican Party, Prosperous Armenia Party and Dashnaktutyun Party were named by 15.00% of respondents as those which collected voters’ passports. In the meantime, 38.90% of the interviewed said “no” to the question “Were the elections clean?”, 36.15% provided a positive answer to this question, and 24.95% had difficulties in answering.

Among various deficiencies in the electoral legislation, the following should be mentioned in the first place:

1. There is no definition of “pre-election campaign” in the Electoral Code, which allowed the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) to announce that all campaigning which took place before the official start of campaign – April 8 - is not considered as such.
2. Contribution by the third party to the party campaign (separate from donation to the campaign fund) is not regulated, as well, which leaves room for uncontrolled expenses.
3. Party financing before the start of campaign (see above) is also not regulated. This also refers to expenses made through the party regular bank account (different from the campaign fund), which makes possible use of party money before the campaign without reflecting such expenditures in the party campaign declarations.

Numerous violations of the electoral legislation were also recorded by the project team. The following should be noted in this respect: campaigning made by the Prime Minister, ministers and deputy ministers during their working hours, use of government vehicles during campaign (which are violations of Article 22<sup>1</sup> of the Electoral Code), pressure exercised on employees of state and private enterprises, intervention by representatives of local and regional government bodies in the electoral processes, unverified voters’ lists, etc.

Certain problems were also revealed with regard to the ballot stubs while reviewing the preliminary results of the proportional votes posted on the CEC website. Thus, a number of stubs in 356 precincts did not correspond to a number of ballots distributed to those precinct electoral commissions, tens of thousands of the stub numbers were missing; a large amount of the stub numbers duplicated one another. In minutes (protocols) of 135 precinct commissions the stub numbers were not mentioned at all whereas in 18 protocols only the stub numbers of the used ballots were recorded. Additionally, in protocols of 45 precinct commissions, it was impossible to identify the stub numbers and in 598 precincts the number of ballots did not match the number of corresponding envelopes for ballots.

The final results of the monitoring will be summarized in a published report.

For more details please contact:

Center For Regional Development / Transparency International Armenia  
5 Nalbandyan St., Room 38, Yerevan 0010, Armenia, Tel: (+374 10) 585578, 526914  
Fax: (+374 10) 585578, E-mail: [crd@transparency.am](mailto:crd@transparency.am), Web site: [www.transparency.am](http://www.transparency.am)